

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

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Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.—JUDE.

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.—PAUL.

EVERY thing in the Universe, in so far as human observation has extended, possesses an adaptation to a certain end, or to certain ends; and this adaptation, is the result of the *material*, and *formal* constitution, or organization of each particular thing, so that the *form* of things, is just as necessary in order to their adaptation to the ends designed, as is the *materials* of which they are composed.

If through ocean, earth, and air, we examine all the works of the Great Architect with the nicest scrutiny, we shall find Him invariably exact, as to the *form*, as well as to the materials of His works.

The finny tribes which people the ocean, are *materially* and *formally* adapted to the watery element, and die when removed from the world of waters; while on the other hand the inhabitants of the earth, and of the air, by reason of their *material* and *formal* organization, but chiefly the *latter*, meet with speedy dissolution, when plunged into the watery abyss, whence the ocean's myriads derive their multiplied enjoyments. The king of beasts can neither traverse with the shark the wide expanse of the Atlantic, nor soar with the bird of Jove to meet the splendid sun, when in meridian glory he looks abroad upon the world! Every

thing in its place, and a place for every thing, is the order of the Universe; and, therefore, every thing is fitted by the Artificer of all things, in *form* as well as *matter*, to fill that sphere for which it was designed.

So important is *form*, with respect to every thing to which our knowledge or observation extends, that things *materially* the same, are often *formally* adapted to very different ends. An axe and a razor for instance. How different are the ends to which these instruments are adapted? and yet they are *materially* the same! Their adaptation to their respective ends, is consequently merely the result of *form*! A chair, a table, a house, and a ship are also *materially* the same, but how different are those ends to which by reason of a difference, merely *formal*, they are adapted! Every body knows how necessary it is that a mechanic should be skillful in his business in order to execute his work in a workman-like manner. No quality in the *materials* on which he is to work, will compensate for his want of ability to give to his mechanism such a form as will be pleasing to his customers; and consequently, the *form* of his work must be attended to, with the utmost care and precision.

Now if *form* be so important as we have represented it to be, and as from all that we can hear, see, smell, taste, or feel, we know it is; and if it is manifest from all the works of the all wise Creator, that He, in all his works, was scrupulously exact as to their *form*, as well as to the *materials* out of which He organised them, must we not be irresistibly led to the conclusion, that He was as tenacious of the *form* of his own revelations, and of the Christian religion, as of His other works? Or will some one argue, that God is more tenacious concerning the *form* of an oyster, a mole, a bat, or even a man, than of that religion by which He designs to emancipate suffering humanity from all its accumulated woes? It cannot be!

If God be the creator of man, as none but Atheists deny, He must have been perfectly well acquainted with his disposition and capacity, and consequently must have known how to adapt a religion to his nature and circumstances; and if He be perfectly benevolent, as the scriptures abun-

dantly testify, He certainly has done so: and if he has given us such a religion as is *materially* and *formally* adapted to our wants, the *form*, as well as the *matter* of this religion, ought to be adhered to by us, with the utmost tenacity.

A person who should be so far influenced by vanity, as to attempt to change the *form* of a man's body, calling some of his members essential, and others non-essential, and should argue that it is not at all requisite that he should have two eyes, because he can see with one; or that he should have two ears, because he can hear with one; or that his head should be covered with hair, because he might keep it warm with a woolen cap; or that wings, instead of arms would be more conducive to his felicity; I say a person who should thus argue, would forfeit all title to common sense should he be serious, and to piety, should he be in jest; and if such a course of procedure with respect to the body of a man be an outrage upon common sense, what shall we say of those who venture to alter the **FORM** of the Christian religion? Is not God just as competent to give us a religion complete in all its members, as he is to organize the body of a man? and are not we just as incompetent, to constitute a religion precisely suited to our natures, as we are by a word, to shape yonder bank of clay into the human form divine?

God has afforded the wise ones of this world ample opportunity to try their skill in giving to mankind a religion capable of ameliorating their condition: In Greece and Rome, whose inhabitants stood pre-eminent in their knowledge of the arts and sciences, and whose eloquence and accomplishments are to this day a theme of astonishment, this trial was instituted, aided by all the resources of the most profound and elevated philosophy of which the world could then boast. And what was the result? "*In professing to be wise, they became fools!*" "*The world by wisdom knew not God.*" "Many of them disgraced human reason by their profligate tenets, and sophistical wrangling; and some of them by their imprudence, buffoonery and beastliness, were a disgrace to human nature. Where should we in our days, except among the Hottentots

and Pagans, expect to find men examining, and consulting the entrails of animals, and seeking from their appearance, and from the flight of birds, counsel and advice to guide and direct them in their most important transactions. Even Socrates, the wisest of them all, while dying, enjoined it upon his friends to sacrifice a fowl to Esculapius. If we take into consideration their temples dedicated to idols; their numerous deities, their superstition, the confidence which they placed in the answers of oracles, and in signs and auguries; their human sacrifices; their prostitution and drunkenness, in the religious worship of Venus, and Bacchus; their exposing their infants to death by cold and hunger, or to be devoured by wild beasts; their having permission to kill their children, and to commit suicide:" If, I say, we take all these things into consideration, shall we not be irresistably convinced that human wisdom is not adequate to such a work as that of inventing, and forming a system of religion adapted to our natures?

The amelioration of the condition of man, was reserved, to be accomplished by the doctrine of the cross. It pleased God by a proclamation, which Grecian and Roman Philosophers called 'foolishness,' to save them that believed. The Great I Am, manifests himself through the flesh of his Son Jesus, and visits our earth with the day spring from on high! The region of the shadow of death is illumined. The deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised, and good news from heaven salutes the poor: idolatrous temples are vacated: Jewish priests and rulers are amazed at the triumphs of the cross; myriads are pierced to the heart by the sword of the Spirit, ably wielded by saints, enlisted as soldiers for life; they get a new heart,—new hopes,—new joys, and pursue their journey in the pathway of truth towards the new Jerusalem; their motto is 'holiness to the Lord!' they deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and live righteously, soberly, and godly in the world! How poor,—how mean were all the effects of the philosophy of Greece and Rome, when compared with the effects of that doctrine, which they denominated 'foolishness!'

Speculative men, however, in process of time crept into the church, who did not conceive it to be compatible with

their interests, to 'hold fast the form of sound words,' by which such wonders had been accomplished. They thought the Christian religion too simple to recommend itself to the erudite philosophers, whose business it was to puzzle their own minds, as well as those of others, by bewildering subtleties, inexplicable even to themselves. In order therefore to render the Christian religion agreeable to the philosophers, it was intermixed with the philosophy of the heathen schools on the one hand; while on the other, the Jews in order to render it agreeable to themselves, blended with it no small portion of Judaism, so that between the two, the original form of the Christian religion was changed, and a kind of mongrel religion substituted in its place.

Of this change, faction, and carnality, was the necessary consequence. Sect after sect arose in quick succession, and ravaged the earth with a degree of cruelty almost incredible. Having departed from the primitive 'form of sound words,' every vagary of the human mind became an article of faith, and the faggot and the sword the puissant arguments by which these mongrel systems were propagated.

Every sect had its *string* of texts, and its peculiar *distillery* by which to spiritualize the word, so that none of them could be at any loss for a system; and as there have always been men in every country, willing to swallow any thing, provided it had enough of the marvellous to recommend it, or even the advantage of novelty, every sectarian system, no matter how extravagant, has had its warm and enthusiastic votaries.

As it was thought that the Holy Scriptures had two or three senses, or at least that they contained some hidden sense, except in those texts the external sense of which happened to support some favorite dogma, it of course devolved on those who were skilled in holy mysteries, to expound the Book; and as the priests have always been supposed by their blind followers to be inspired, and consequently to understand the internal, as well as the external sense of scripture, it was an easy matter to vindicate any system of error: for if the external sense failed to prove the

truth of a dogma, it was generally found that the internal sense, or some of the internal senses would prove it point blank!

It was in this way that MYSTERY BABYLON obtained her power over the earth, and that she intoxicated the nations. Her priests converted the Bible into a book of holy, or rather unholy riddles, and thus intoxicated the people with their puzzling and inexplicable speculations. Both the *matter* and the *form* of the primitive religion were changed; its aspect was distorted; its members dislocated; its professors alienated from one another, and the Dragon, and the Owl invited to dwell in the place which otherwise would have been a temple for the Holy Spirit!

Neither has the effects of this apostacy yet ceased. There are a great many little Popes in our country, who are as warm advocates for *mysticism*, as was the original Pope their father. These *creatures*, continue spiritualizing, or rather humanizing the scriptures, and by this means perpetuate sectarianism amongst us, to the constant disgrace of christianity. Every sect has its *distillery*, and its *string* of texts for *distillation*, and hence the diverse sectarian spirits which at present figure on the religious stage! A Shaker distils, or spiritualizes his parcel of texts, and the result is the spirit of Shakerism! A Calvinist does the same, and the result is the spirit of Calvinism! An Arminian obtains by the spiritualizing process, the spirit of Arminianism! The Universalist, that of Universalism! and so of all the sects: and these *spirits* are so very *different* that they will by no means amalgamate. It is true that their votaries do not in this age cut off the heads of each other, but this may be in consequence of a want of power!

How lamentable is the present condition of sectarian Christendom! At this very moment there are thousands of individuals who would be warm hearted Christians, were it not for the intestine broils which exist amongst us. 'We know not,' say they, 'what party to join: you all profess to be right, and all accuse one another of being wrong, and if your wise men cannot determine which is the right way, how should it be expected that we can do it?' 'Ah! look at these Christians,' says the infidel; 'see how they hate, bite,

and devour one another. Are we not as honest and as charitable as they? Do we more often overreach our neighbors in a bargain than they? Has it not become proverbial that the infidels feed the needy, while the Christians only pray for them? 'Go home' says the Indian to the missionary, 'and agree among yourselves, and then come and preach to Indian, and Indian hear you.' It is thus that professors of Christianity have more seriously injured the religion of Christ, than have all the avowed infidels in the world.

If the Christian religion was originally *materially* and *formally* adapted to our nature and circumstances, as it certainly was, it is evident that every alteration, either in the *form*, or *matter* of this religion, would in a greater or less degree, unfit it for producing those effects in our minds which the Creator designed to produce by it: and in this way we account for the carnality of those who profess it. Many of its doctrines have been considered to be non-essential, and have consequently constituted no part of those sectarian systems which have been substituted for Christianity, while other doctrines which were taught by Christ and his apostles, have been so mutilated, that they scarcely retain a vestige of their primitive likeness, and consequently there exists but little similarity between a primitive, and a modern sectarian congregation.

I desire that it should be remembered that it is 'the *form* of sound words' which the apostle admonishes Timothy to hold fast; and not the *form of meanings*, and *private interpretations*; nor even the *words* themselves, in any other *form* than that in which they were delivered to him. The *form* of the words, as well as the words themselves, must be adhered to, with the utmost tenacity. The doctrine of Christ may well be called a *mould of doctrine*, possessing those characters and dimensions which the plastic skill of the Creator gave to it, so that when our minds, like metals are cast into it, they are invariably impressed with the same characters. It is not this *mould of doctrine* which makes so many *genuses* and *species* of Christians; every sect has a mould of its own manufacture, and to this fact is attributable the diversity which at present prevails in Christendom!

The truth is, the Christian religion is *toto celo* a divine system. 'I certify you brethren,' says Paul, 'that the gospel which was preached by me was not after man: for I neither received it of man, nor was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.' This divine gospel, in its divine *form*, had been given by revelation to this apostle, and he was solicitous that it should be preserved in its pure and unmixed state, uncontaminated with the alloy of human invention, that as it was adapted to man, by Jesus who revealed it, it might *work effectually* in all believers, and 'bring forth fruit to the glory of God;' and hence he says to those who had received this gospel, 'beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit.'

The time, it is hoped, is not far distant, when a knowledge of the primitive *mould*, or *form* of doctrine will be obtained, and when Christians will experience the sanctifying influences of truth on their minds, in such a degree, that they will no longer disgrace the religion of Christ by their vagaries, and carnality. 'Sanctify them through thy truth,' said Jesus, '*thy word is truth*.'

It will then be found as I have said in a preceding part of this work, that '*the Christian religion, is a religion of facts*.' The testimonies of the apostles are all predicated on facts; our faith rests on their testimonies; and our obedience is drawn out in subordination to the law of Christ, by his constraining love, so that it becomes our meat, and our drink to do our heavenly Father's will.

It will also be found that not one of the philosophical systems of religion about which there has been so much contention, makes any part of the religion of Christ. The peculiar *arts* and *mysteries* of Calvinism, Arminianism, and all the other *Isms*, have as little approximation towards Christianity, as have the *arts* and *mysteries* of cabinet making, or medical botany! The apostle paid no attention to the opinions of men, except in cases in which their opinions led them to some violation of the law of Christ. The Christian religion is a divinely constituted system, having in its constitution, such truths, and such truths only, as the Divine Artificer chose to incorporate in it; and these truths are of such a nature, and by a Divine constitution were made

to assume such a form, as perfectly suited them to our nature and circumstances; and consequently there are myriads of truths in existence which constitute no part of the Christian religion.

In order to illustrate this fact, let it be remembered, that even the apostles, when they communicated truths which by the Divine being had not been incorporated with the divinely revealed doctrine of Christ, drew a conspicuous line of demarkation between those truths, and that doctrine which had been given by revelation from heaven. The apostle Paul for instance, after having expressed some truths appertaining to the matrimonial department, proceeds to draw the following distinctive line, between those truths, and the truths of revelation: 'But I speak this,' says he, 'by permission, and not of commandment.' And again; 'unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from the husband.' 'But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.' 1 Cor. 7. By reading this chapter, the reader will be enabled to perceive, with what noble, and ingenuous particularity this line of demarkation between those truths which were obtained as the result of human observation and experiment, were distinguished, from such as came by revelation, by the primitive, and authoritative teachers of the Christian religion; and will consequently, apprehend our meaning, when we say, that the Christian doctrine is divine *in toto*, and is constituted of such truths, and such truths only, as God in the infinity of his wisdom chose to admit into its divine constitution!

So important did Paul consider this distinction to be, that he seems never to have lost sight of it, but to have acted in conformity with it, in the whole of his religious intercourse with mankind. Within that circle of divine truths which comprehended the whole of the doctrine of Christ, he was tenaciously obsequious to the mandates of his heavenly Lord, and with untiring perseverance disseminated those truths among men for their salvation: but still, as it respected other truths not comprehended within this circle, he communicated them, as being merely of human authority; and consequently, as not possessing, those essential, and imposing sanctions, which characterized

those stupendous facts, testimonies, and commands, for which he lived, and for which he died! What a lesson might our creed mongers here learn! Even an apostle, an authoritative ambassador of Jesus, surrounded with a splendid halo of miraculous gifts, and Christian accomplishments, would make nothing binding upon the consciences of his brethren, except those truths, which by the Almighty had been organized into a divine system for that very purpose. The English word *religion*, Latin *religio*, from *re-ligo*, to bind fast, speaks volumes on this subject. The minds of the truly religious are bound fast, by that divinely authoritative 'form of sound words,' which was given by revelation for the government of all the citizens of Zion; and they are thus constrained to 'visit the fatherless and the widow, and to keep themselves unspotted from the pollutions of the world.' This is what mongrel, or mixed systems of religion never did—never can do. The history of all Christendom stands in proof of this position. Systems of religion partly human, and partly divine, or human *in toto*, will generate proselytes, or children, in their own image, and after their own likeness; and never, until the minds of Christians shall be brought into a state of complete subordination to that unadulterated system of government which was administered by Jesus and his apostles, will Christians, '*be followers of God as dear children.*'

O! ye dreamers! ye sleepers! ye loungers! arise and strip yourselves of every thing that hinders you from an unreserved submission to the King of Kings! Fight against your Lord no longer! No longer by your fancies, and speculations, and wranglings about hair-breadth metaphysical subtleties, give the adversaries cause to speak reproachfully! The *Millennium*, the *Millennium* for which we have so long prayed, can only in this way be introduced, to bless our miserable world! Peace on earth, and good will among men, will be commensurate with our advancement in, and conformity to, the principles of the one only true,—only Divine religion! You can never have peace, such as the scriptures contemplate, until a radical reformation shall be effected in all professedly religious sects! Various mixed systems of religion have for centuries, with

vehement zeal, and astonishing ability been propagated; and what has been the result? Wars, rumors of wars, wrath, strife, divisions innumerable, with a small mixture of good! And will not the same cause perpetuate the same effect? Are not divisions at this very time multiplying amongst us? Is not the religious world at this very hour, in a state of mental intoxication, reeling to and fro, like a drunken man? Yes! They have been made drunk by dreams, and fancies, and imaginations, and nothing but New Testament facts can ever sober them. Return then, O! ye weary and heavy-laden, to the primitive "*form of sound words*," and Christ "*will give you rest*."

And ye unbelievers, who have spoken reproachfully of the religion of Jesus, permit me to invite you to examine the Christian religion as it is taught in the New Testament,—examine its evidences,—consider how powerful it is in creating motives, or incentives to holy living—consider all these things, aside from the baneful example of immoral professors of mixed sectarian systems; and if you conduct this investigation with diligence and in the spirit of candor, conviction of the truth of our holy religion will, I think, be the result.—EDITOR.

APPENDIX.

BEING now about to bring this volume to a close, the imperative demands of that duty, which I owe to my Maker, to myself, and to mankind, require, that I should make known to the public, the principles on which I have acted, in withdrawing from the Universalists, and in becoming an advocate for that order of things which was introduced by Jesus Christ. And this becomes the more necessary, not only to stop the mouths of calumniators, but as it may be calculated to give satisfaction to the minds of well disposed persons, who would be unhappy, should it appear that I have been guilty of such aberrations from rectitude, as those which have been charged against me.

It will, I suppose, be admitted by all men, enemies as well as friends, that I have had better opportunities, to acquaint myself with my own motives of action, than have those, who have taken it upon themselves to impeach me with acting from motives irreconcilable with candor and probity, without ever having acquainted themselves with the principles upon which I have acted; and if so, it would be well for them to give me a candid and patient hearing, before they pronounce upon me sentence of condemnation.

It is a circumstance much to be deplored, that the spirit of religious faction, has from time immemorial, been a powerful incentive to evil surmises, base calumnies, bitter recrimination, and in short, to almost every species of contemptible and dishonorable dealing, calculated to bring into disrepute, religion, that inestimable gem, that best, that highest gift of heaven. For as the poet says:

"On eagle's wings, immortal scandals fly,
While virtuous actions are but born to die!"

And professors of christianity are not unfrequently the polluted, and active instruments, by which this lamentable order of things is perpetuated!

As it respects myself, therefore, I will proceed to lay before the public the principles upon which I have acted, as well as my motives of action; and I will do this, for the purpose of preventing those persons from being misled, who are endued with enough integrity, to desire a sufficiency of light relative to my religious changes, to enable them to pronounce upon me a righteous judgment; and in order to arrive at this end, legitimately, it will be necessary for me, as far as may be consistent with the brevity which the contracted limits of this appendix has forced upon me, to retrospect many of the prominent incidents of my life, commencing at an early period. And in doing this, I will endeavor to render this article as useful as possible, by occasional moral, or religious reflections on those incidents.

It was my good fortune to be a son of honest and industrious parents, and being also the eldest son, I participated a large share of their affection. It is scarcely necessary for me to say, that my mother in particular idolized me, for the love of mothers, is, I had almost said, universal

and immutable! But this I will say, that could I with my present knowledge, begin life anew, under the kind admonitions of my affectionate mother, her pathetic remonstrances against my juvenile eccentricities, and boyish foibles, would make a much deeper impression on my heart, and be far more effectual in regulating the actions of my life, than they were, during those by-gone years, those sunny intervals of my existence, when I esteemed those restraints as evils, hindering me from the enjoyment of innocent pastimes.

I have no recollection of my earliest religious impressions. I however, well remember the time when my father took me by the hand, in the big church, (which was a brick* church,) in Caroline county, Virginia, and led me to the Parson, for the purpose of having me *christianed*, or *christened* as we called it, which was performed by a ceremony which I do not now recollect, and by the putting of some drops of water on my face. My mother also learned me to pray, and for several years I performed this duty on my knees by her side, and frequently with an ardor of devotion, not always enjoyed by christians of adult years.

Before I was eight years of age, I frequently engaged in secret prayer, and poured forth my soul with crying and tears, in fervent supplications to my Maker; and had it been my privilege to have been at that period a member of a christian congregation, such as the New Testament contemplates, I am morally certain, that I should have grown up, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and consequently have escaped a thousand sinful snares, into which I was afterwards unwarily led, by the gilded baits of the adversary. And one reason among many others, why I have formed this conclusion, is, because that if the religious instructions which I received from my mother, blended as they were with error, made such deep and salu-

*In primitive times, a church signified a congregation of people,—a christian church, a congregation of christians. But subsequently, we have brick, stone, and wooden churches; and also, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Universalist churches. These things were never known in the world until long after the days of the Apostles.—EDITOR.

tary impressions on my mind, certainly, much more might have been effected, by a religious congregation, in primitive order, under the direction of its King and its Bishops, with all the puissant facts of the gospel in its possession.

The infantile mind is tender, and easily susceptible of impressions, good and bad; and moreover, children are endued with powers, almost incredibly imitative, and therefore, should be instructed, and cultivated with the most tender assiduity, and unremitting diligence, and no pains should be spared in preserving them from all impressions, which might tend to give to their minds, a vicious bias: for,

“Their minds, like tender ozers, take the bow,
And as they first are bent, are prone to grow.”

No apostolic precept, is, perhaps, more often violated, or less regarded by a large proportion of the Christian world, than is that, by which parents are taught to “bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord:” and yet, there is no precept, which has greater claims on their attention. The little harmless innocents, are born into this world, through parental instrumentality, and are dependant on that society into which they are introduced, especially their parents, not only for protection and nourishment, but also for knowledge, and habits of virtue; and is it not cruelty, is it not barbarism, to permit them in their tender years, and before they are capable of judging correctly with respect to the formation of human character, to contract vicious habits, and to form a character, such as is the result of the examples, and circumstances, which are generally permitted to surround them? I know not how parents will answer for this transgression, when they shall be arraigned before the tribunal of the Judge of all! It is a momentous subject! But to return.

Notwithstanding the kind instructions of my affectionate parents, and the good impressions which I thereby received, I was frequently allured, in consequence of a defect in those instructions, and by the evil example of my comrades, to act counter to the dictates of my conscience. And although this conscience was the result of the instructions which I had received, I do not esteem it as being the less valuable on that account, for it admonished me, when

I acted counter to its dictates, in all the terrible majesty of those truths, which I had received into my mind; and often, and bitterly did I regret through its remonstrances, my many follies.

My parents, as I increased in years, became gradually less attentive in advancing me in the course of religious instruction which they had begun. I frequently omitted my prayers; became fond of play; indulged in the multitudinous extravagancies of my schoolfellows; and in short, became, what every competent judge of the matter would denominate a bad boy.

I however often experienced during the intervals of my juvenile sports and pastimes, reflections of the most serious nature, and sometimes in private, invoked my Creator, to pardon my many sins.

My father had about this time removed from Virginia to the state of Kentucky. I was about fourteen years of age, and was no doubt increasing, rather than diminishing in wickedness. My associates were generally irreligious, and when I was not engaged at such business as was allotted to me by my father, I was busily employed in amusing my mind with the innumerable frivolities, which, alas! to the shame of the present generation be it spoken, occupy the minds of two thirds of the youth in our country.

About this time, the war between Great Britain and the United States commenced, and to this circumstance, more than to any other, I am indebted for my present love of reading. I became deeply interested in the operations of the British and American armies, and as my father took a newspaper at that time, I read over, and over again, the various accounts of battles which it contained, and thus contracted a habit, and consequently, a love of reading, which has rather increased from that period to the present. I mention this circumstance, in order to encourage parents to the use of such means as may be most likely to induce their children to become, if possible, habitual readers.

My reading induced reflection and observation, and as my intervals of religious seriousness had never wholly forsaken me, I became an attendant at all the places of religious worship in the neighborhood. My design in going

to meeting, was, to obtain religious instruction. I was an attentive hearer. I do not remember that I was ever troubled with drowsiness at meeting in my life. And yet, there were but few of the sermons which I heard, that appeared to me to be consistent. I have sat whole hours under preaching, and envied the congregation the happiness which I supposed they enjoyed. For I then thought, that the people understood the preacher. And I sometimes concluded, that the reason why I did not understand, was, because I was a *simpleton*; but more frequently, that I was, as he told me I was, "*a natural man*," and consequently "*could not discern the things of the Spirit*"!!

This kind of preaching, was, to say the best of it, very discouraging. It seemed to me, that contradiction, was the prominent characteristic of a great many sermons, and especially of those delivered by preachers who were Calvinistic in their sentiments. When I would hear a man hold forth, one hour and fifty minutes, to prove the Divine decrees, and that sinners are as dead as are the nations under ground, and that nothing but physical power equal to that which resuscitated Lazarus could quicken them, and immediately after, hear the same preacher, by a warm and pathetic exhortation, invite those very sinners to repentance, it was too much! it was too inconsistent! it outraged all my conceptions of propriety! and as I finally concluded that these inconsistencies were contained in the Bible, I rejected the scriptures, preaching and all;—read Thomas Paine;—became a deistical polemic;—read the Bible only to make it contradict itself;—laughed at serious things;—used some profane language by way of ornament to my conversation;—turned gallant; and in short, became a most preposterously wicked and presumptuous mortal. This change was effected, when I was going on seventeen years of age.

But I should never have reached this excess of wickedness, had I been trained from my infancy, to the Divine, and incomparable discipline of the New Testament. Had I been initiated into a Christian church,—a church in gospel order, when I was eight years of age, and had those New Testament facts which were suited to my capacity

been inculcated on my mind, with that diligence, and perseverance, which Christianity enjoins, I should have grown in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, so that at seventeen, I should have been so intimately acquainted with the Christian religion, and its evidences, that neither the inconsistencies of sectarian philosophy, nor the disgusting ribaldry of Thomas Paine, could have moved me from Jesus, the celestial attractive of every christian soul!

I studied the arts and mysteries of Deism three years; that is, until I was going on twenty-one years of age, at which time I became dissatisfied with it, for various reasons: one of which was, that I had never known a person reformed, or made better by Deism. Those who were moral men before they embraced it, generally remained moral afterwards, and *vice versa*; and I could see no good in it, because I had not been able to discover any good coming from it, and it must be a bad wind, that brings not good to somebody!

I consequently concluded that I would again turn my attention to the Scriptures, for as I had known multitudes reformed by Christianity, I readily inferred, that the cause which produces the better effect, must be the better cause; and therefore, that as Christianity was more efficacious than Deism, in reforming sinners, it must, to say the least of it, be better than Deism.

In my biblical researches, however, I met with many serious difficulties; for my former notions and arguments, together with some vicious habits which I had contracted, kept my mind in a state of perpetual doubt, perplexity and anxiety.

This state of mind continued about two years; at which time, I removed to Indiana, Crawford county. And as my employment had been, from the time I was twenty-one, 'to rear the tender mind, and teach the young idea how to shoot,' I commenced a school in a respectable neighborhood, and boarded and lodged, as the custom then was in the country, with my employers. It was not until about the expiration of the first quarter, that I discovered that several of my employers were Restorationists. I immediately turned my attention to this, to me, new theory of re-

ligion; and spared no pains to become acquainted with its principles. I ascertained that these Restorationists believed in a future judgment, and in a limited, though awful punishment for the wicked beyond the grave, and that all men would, notwithstanding, be finally restored to holiness and happiness. The prejudices of my education were immediately enlisted against this theory. I had conceived an exalted opinion of the moral virtues, and moral worth of these Restorationists, before I ascertained that they were such, and bitterly deplored the circumstance, that such good men should entertain such erroneous religious views!

I accordingly commenced reading the Scriptures with redoubled diligence, and availed myself of every opportunity to endeavor to convince these people of their errors. It was no uncommon thing for us to argue the question until midnight. I however soon had the mortification, not only to find my arguments to be utterly unavailing, but in comparison with theirs, lighter than the chaff of the summer threshing floor! The incongruous masses of sectarian rubbish, which the evil circumstances which had surrounded me from infancy to manhood, had heaped upon my mind, had so obscured my mental vision, that my arguments were an extravagant tissue of sectarian contradiction, and consequently possessed no fitness by which to carry conviction to the minds of my opponents.

It was not long until some of my employers procured for me Winchester's Dialogues on the Restoration of all things. I commenced reading this book, with a disposition not to be convinced. My expectation was, that I should be able to detect contradictions in it, and to point them out to my friends. But, friendly reader, what will you think of me, when I tell you, that before I had read the half of the book, the tears poured profusely from my eyes! I was convinced of its truth! The hard speeches which I had uttered against this doctrine, stood in terrible array against me! The love of God in the gift of his Son, was reflected, or seemed to be reflected on my heart from every surrounding object, and I left the school-house in which I was then sitting surrounded by my scholars, and retired to an adjoining grove, to praise in vocal strains, my God,

whose name, and whose nature I then believed, and do yet believe to be love! I was inexpressibly happy! I loved God, because He first loved me; and loved all mankind, because God loved them, and gave his Son to die for them. My former sins became hateful to me!—I reformed! And from that point of time to the present, which is about nine years, I have endeavored to serve the Lord.

As soon as I imbibed the Restorationist sentiment, I became, by day and by night, a close reader of the bible, and many were the joys and the transports of which I then partook, in this delightful employment. There was also a reciprocity of benevolent feeling between those friends who had been instrumental in effecting the above change, and myself, most exquisite, and which I hope, ever to retain in my recollection, and to cherish, by all the actions of my life.

Two years subsequent to this period, I became a preacher of the doctrine of the Restorationists; and one year after (September 1824,) constituted a church in Crawford county, Indiana, of the Restorationist sentiment; in which church, I continued a minister, until the summer of 1826; at which time, I commenced travelling;—came to the state of Ohio, to Geauga county;—returned in the beginning of winter to Chillicothe; and remained at this latter place, as a preacher of Universalism, during six months; at the expiration of which term, I again commenced travelling and preaching, and have been so engaged ever since.

I must not, however, omit mentioning in this place, that although, when I at first imbibed the doctrine of the Restorationists, I believed in millions of years of punishment after death, as the portion of the finally impenitent; yet, by subsequent reading and observation, my mind was imperceptibly changed with respect to the duration of this punishment, so that I ultimately arrived at the conclusion that there would be no punishment after death!

In this state of mind I continued not quite twelve months; for it did seem to me, that the preaching of Universalism, was more pernicious than beneficial to the human family. While I was a Restorationist, I rejoice to know, that many sinners reformed under my ministry, but after I became a

Universalist, if moral reformation was produced, in any case, by my preaching, I do not know it. And I do now affirm, before God, who knows that I do not lie, that it is my opinion, an opinion too, which is the result of observation and experiment, that had I, during the time in which I was preaching the above doctrine, been delivering lectures on *Owenism*, my ministry would have been as advantageous to mankind. And I therefore rejected Universalism, and became again a Restorationist. This was in the fall of 1827, in Portage county, Ohio.

In the spring of the following year, 1828, it was my good fortune to hear Walter Scott, who is *vulgarly* called a *Campbellite*, preach the *ancient gospel*; that is, the gospel, as it is in the book. And although I went to this meeting for the purpose of opposing Mr. Scott, after I had heard him, I saw plainly, that if I opposed him, I would expose myself; for he had taught nothing but the unsophisticated truths of the new Testament,—and how could I oppose him?

I however still felt a strong antipathy to this *Scottism*, as it was called; and concluded, that I could in all probability, by hearing him several times, detect some monstrous error in his preaching; and this induced me to attend his meetings again and again; but the consequence was, that I was myself convinced of some fundamental errors in my own method of preaching, and that the preaching of Mr. Scott was in strict accordance with the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles.

I now ask, what would truth and magnanimity, under such circumstances, have required me to do? Must I stifle my convictions? No! This would have been hypocrisy! Must I acknowledge them? Yes! This, then, is the front of my offending! I acknowledged them! and so long as the lamp of life shall continue to burn in my bosom, or a spark of truth shall animate my soul, I hope magnanimously to acknowledge all Divine truths, in so far, as I may through the grace of God be able to discover them!

The preaching of Mr. Scott did not, however, convince me, that the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all men was not a revealed truth; for I as firmly believed

this doctrine, long after this period, as I ever did before. He convinced me, however, that my method of preaching was by far too speculative;—that I had disarranged many points of the gospel;—had wholly omitted some; and in short, that the *form* of doctrine by which I was labouring to *mould* the minds of the people, was essentially different, at least in *form*, from the Apostolic *mould*, and that until the Apostolic mould, or form of doctrine should be exhibited in *matter* and *form*, as it was by the Apostles, the minds of Christian professors would be as diverse, as are the diversified counterfeit moulds into which their minds have been cast, and that this diversity of minds, the result of a diversity in the *matter* and *form* of sectarian moulds of doctrine, would perpetuate sectarian discord, as long as they should continue to be exhibited.

I, therefore, as soon as I was convinced of this fact, commenced exhibiting, what I then considered, and what I do yet consider to be the primitive '*form of sound words*;' and lest I should be laboring under some unknown illusion, (for the Universalists told me I was insane,) I performed a considerable tour of preaching before I submitted to baptism, and made it a point, to promulgate those items of doctrine which the Universalists and others considered to be most exceptionable, that I might have the benefit of the wisdom of a multitude of counsellors, in enabling me to arrive at right conclusions. But all the arguments, which, during this tour, were advanced against that order of things which I had espoused, rather served to confirm, than to waver my faith; and I can safely say the same, with respect to every argument which I have since heard relative to this subject.

Having performed this tour, and having obtained so salutary a confirmation of my faith, I immediately rode the distance of forty miles to the house of E. Williams, a highly respectable, and able minister of the doctrine of the Restorationists, living in Portage county, Ohio, in order to convince him of the truth of my new discoveries, should I be right; or to be convinced of my errors, should I be wrong. This E. Williams was, moreover, a man for whom I possessed, and for whom I do yet possess, an ardour of love

and friendship, of the most exalted, and unwavering character. To him I communicated my new and peculiar views. I also laid before him the arguments, or rather some of the arguments, by which I had been convinced of their correctness, and on the fourth day after I had arrived at his house, enjoyed the superlative satisfaction, of receiving from this beloved brother a declaration of his conviction of the truth of those principles. And in a few days afterwards, in the transports of joyful hope, we mutually submitted to the ordinance of baptism, and by *reciprocity* of administration, both still firmly retaining the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all men: and this will account for our receiving baptism *reciprocally*, as was above stated.

Previously to my immersion, I was resolved neither to resist, nor to encourage by any partial measures, my convictions concerning the final salvation of all men. If true, I was willing to believe it; and whether true or false, I knew, that the reading of the Scriptures impartially, could have no tendency to lead me into error. I therefore resolved to bring my mind if possible, or at least as much as possible, like a blank surface, to the ministry of Jesus and his Apostles, and to permit them to impress upon it such characters of truth as they chose.

I was aware, that *habit*, *passion*, and *imagination*, are potent governors in this world; and that if I would arrive at logical, and scriptural conclusions, I must disenthral myself from their dominion, and become exclusively a creature of testimony. I had seen *habit* cause old professors of error to resolve to adhere to their errors, when the strongest reason which they could urge in their defence, was, that they had already adhered to them a long time: I had seen *passion* make its hundreds of proselytes, who had neither eyes, nor ears to any thing else until *passion* had subsided: and I had seen imagination carry its votaries in the whirlwind of extravagant theory, into the most ridiculous, and sometimes into the most pernicious delusions; and I chose to be the vassal of no such despots! Imagination, in particular, is an irresistible enemy to right conclusions, if it be not chastened by facts. How often have

men,—yes, men of talents, imagined themselves to be *Tea Pots*, or that they were made of *glass*! How often have individuals of our species fancied themselves to be in the agonies of death, when, but for the workings of their imagination, they were in good health! and have we not also good reasons for believing, that the power of imagination has driven thousands to an untimely grave? As soon as we permit our minds to wander beyond the limits of facts, or beyond the confines of true testimony concerning facts, we sail on a fathomless and immeasurable ocean, without rudder, compass or ballast, and render ourselves liable to all the moral casualties and dangers, which by the heavens or the earth, the Bible or the sound principles of human ethics, have been pointed out as the concomitants of error. It has not been long, since many sections of these United States, from New-Hampshire to New-Orleans, were thrown into a ferment, by the Utopian schemes, and bewitching sophistry of Robert Owen and his satellites! New Harmony was to be the city of Mental Independence, and the centre of a terrestrial paradise! Multitudes believed the report, and hastened in crowds to this sceptical Elysium; but instead of finding “the best of every thing,” as they had *imagined*, many of them plunged themselves into poverty; and the city of Mental Independence now stands, as a monument of the folly of *these creatures of imagination*!

Having therefore, before me, these, and many other facts in proof of the evil effects produced by the workings of an imagination uncontrolled by true testimony, I was resolved to examine, in the first place, the evidences of the Christian religion, and then, after having acquainted myself with these evidences, to endeavor to satisfy my own mind, by an impartial reading of the Scriptures, relative to all the points of doctrine which they might contain. This, I was convinced, was a rational, and logical course, and I did not wish to be diverted from it.

I had during my past life been driven to and fro, by the bewildering impossibilities of imaginative systems; I had passed through several changes of sentiment; I had experienced much chagrin in consequence of these changes;

and being still a votary of truth, I wished to elicit her by such advances, as would ensure her favor; and believing, as I did, that I was already in the possession of many indubitable gospel facts, I desired to propagate these, and these alone, until such time as I should legitimately obtain a knowledge of other facts.

This determination and practice, however, rendered me obnoxious to the wrath, and evil surmisings of the spirit of sectarianism. My former friends, the Universalists, desired to hear me sing, or play, the notes of their favorite doctrine, which I, consistently with the above principles and resolutions, could by no means do; and on the other hand, the advocates for endless punishment were prejudiced against me, because I was not a believer in what they esteemed a fundamental article of Christian faith!

This, you will perceive, was a difficult position to occupy. The Universalists could not conceive how it was possible that a man could, consistently with the principles of honesty, refuse to preach the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all men, so long as he believed it to be true; and many of the advocates for endless punishment were equally at a loss to know, how a man possessing such a sentiment, could be a Christian.

Amidst all the uproar, which this collision of opinions caused, I was resolved to hold a steady hand. I told both those who believed, and those who did not believe in the final holiness and happiness of all men, that I had not changed my sentiments with respect to that doctrine; but that I was disposed to pursue such a course as would make for peace; that I was determined to act in subordination to that law of Christ which says,* 'Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but without regard to differences of opinions,' and that I would not preach any thing which I did not consider to be a fact of fundamental importance, in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At the Mahoning Association, about five months after my immersion, I was publicly questioned relative to my sentiments, and from a bench on which I stood, I did not

*Macknight's Translation.

hesitate to declare to the whole congregation, that it was still my *opinion*, that all men would finally become holy and happy. This fact can be proved by scores of witnesses.

I shall never, as long as I retain my memory, forget the magnanimity of the Messrs. Campbells and Scott, and several others, exhibited on this occasion. They acted as men of noble minds, highly elevated above the paltry bickerings of speculative partizans; for though they considered my Restorationist sentiment as a vagary of my brain, they did not treat me with contempt, as bigots would have done, but with meekness and kindness encouraged me to persevere in the Christian race! And Alexander Campbell, also, invited me to pay him a visit at his own house, in order that he might have an opportunity to convince me, that the doctrine of Universal Restoration is not taught in the Scriptures.

I was also asked, in the village of Richmond, in Ross county, Ohio, in the month of February, 1829, by a Methodist preacher, 'whether I then believed the doctrine of endless punishment?' and I answered, 'the doctrine of endless punishment, Sir, is no article of my creed!' Did this look like hypocrisy?

The fact is, that from the period of my embracing the primitive 'form of sound words,' I was resolved to take no position on any doctrinal point, far removed from that centre,* which is the grand attractive of Christianity. I stood therefore on gospel facts, and taught the unequivocal testimonies of Christ and his Apostles concerning those facts, requiring all who had ears to hear to submit unreservedly to the commands of Jesus, and thereby to obtain all the rewards which are promised to the obedient, and shun those evils, whatever they might be, which are consequent on disobedience. I endeavored to convince my hearers, every where, of the practicability of union and brotherly love, even among those, whose philosophical religious opinions should in many points be antipodes to each other, and that nothing more was necessary in order to the ushering in of this blissful order of things, than submission to our Lord

* See page 145, of this work.

Jesus Christ. I perceived that the secret of sect-making, consisted in attaching more importance to some peculiarity, or peculiarities of human origin, than to gospel facts; and that even gospel facts might be so disarranged, as to constitute diverse centres of sectarian attraction, and therefore, I made the death and resurrection of Jesus the centre point to which in all my preaching I labored to direct the minds of my hearers; and by the constraining love, with which these facts are calculated to inspire the minds of Christians, I strove to bind their souls together, around this one centre, in the unity of spirit, and in the bonds of peace.

I perceived, that the minds of men are so constituted,—are so under the influence of imagination,—and have been so bewildered by the speculations of priests and philosophers, that a departure from the New Testament system of tangible facts, and a destitution of the all captivating influences of the death and resurrection of Jesus, in such a degree as to be more influenced by other facts, than by these, could not but eventuate in a multiplication of sects, and consequently, in the multiplied abominations inseparable from the contentions, antipathies, contrarieties, and endless divisions of those sects!

I perceived that under existing circumstances, an eloquent preacher might advocate a system, no matter how visionary, and he would obtain a multitude of adherents. For not to mention again the case of Robert Owen and his vagaries, who has not heard of the Pilgrims, who some years ago passed through this state? These filthy beings were enthusiastically devoted to their system; and ridiculous, irrational, and unscriptural as it was, so immovable was the faith of many of them, that on the banks of the Arkansas they agonized and starved, with the expectation that their dried sassafras sticks would bud and grow, in that promised land! In other cases, men have imagined that they would never die; and whole congregations of honest religionists, have so nearly starved to death, under a sense that it was their duty to starve, that medical aid was necessary, in order to their restoration. In Guernsey county in this state, an old deformed impostor announced himself to the people as the Eternal God! and about twenty, it seems,

became believers, in a very short time! The Shakers rejected matrimony, and taught that they were already in the resurrection, and multitudes believed! Now if in connexion with these almost incredible facts, which have existed in our own time and country, we read the history of the church from the days of the Apostles, and acquaint ourselves with the principles maintained by many of the hundreds of sects, which have for a time figured in the world, we shall see, that there is no notion so chimerical as not to be believed by somebody, nor so trifling, as not, under certain circumstances, to become the peculiarity, or sectarian centre,—the centre of attraction with some sect! and hence we shall be led irresistibly to the conclusion, that until those glorious facts which constitute the centre of Christianity, shall obtain such an influence over our minds, as the magnet has on those particles of steel which are within the sphere of its influence, and consequently, shall influence our minds more than can any thing else, within the compass of the human imagination, we shall be forever liable to be drawn away by other attractions, and to be formed into sectarian bodies around those attractive peculiarities which may chance to influence our minds! and hence also, the tendency to sectarian divisions will exist in an exact proportion as the minds of the people shall be destitute of the influences of the cross of Christ, and shall be subject to the influence of those objects, which draw their souls away to the love of other peculiarities.

Thus did I reason; and thus have I labored for the welfare of mankind; and I thank God that my labor has not been in vain! I have seen men, who were philosophically Calvinists, and Arminians, and Restorationists, members of the same congregation, and sitting around the same table of the Lord; and in the joyful fervors of the same Christian love, attracted by the one cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, praising God in concert; and there were no divisions among them! O! what a sight was this! How noble an object to be sought! My soul takes fire while I write, and as the flame increases, resolution on resolution arises, that while life shall last, I will never let go my hold of this gospel, which so happily terminates in such exquisite peace, and good will among men!

This, then, is the sin, for which I have been drawn, and quartered, and gibbeted by sectarian periodicals! Yes! the sin of *peace making*, is that for which I am now to be crucified! Had I buried my convictions in the callous heart of a dastardly hypocrite, and continued preaching in my old way, instead of pursuing the course which I have most conscientiously pursued, all would have been well! My serpent form would have been embraced by that sect, the peculiarities of which I continued to support, with fond sectarian delight and cordiality! But as I was constrained, by what I believed to be the light of truth, to espouse what all my convictions told me was the New Testament order of things, and for the sake of peace, and the welfare of man, to refuse to contend for my former peculiarities, which did not appear to me to make for peace, under the evil circumstances under which the whole family of man was placed; because, I say, I pursued the latter course, and not the former, I have become a monster in human form!

It is true, that when I embraced the 'form of sound words,' I did not refuse to rebuke in some cases 'sharply,' those who rejected the obvious laws of Jesus Christ, nor do I yet intend to cease rebuking them. In order that the peace of the gospel be enjoyed by us, we must keep the commandments of Him who is the 'leader and commander of the people,' and until the people shall know, that all the commands of the King are essential, and that the ordinances of the house of God are no more to be dispensed with, than are the laws of our country, their ignorance concerning this fact, will be as prolific a source of sectarianism, as any other: for a disposition to reject some of the commands of Jesus as non-essentials, has the same tendency to create differences amongst us, that adding to those commands would do. But whether I have spoken to the people by the gentle invitations of the gospel, or in the sharp and cutting language of rebuke, my object has been, and is now, peace!

It has, however, been said, that when I was immersed, I did not myself believe in this ordinance, but that I submitted in order to prevent the Campbellites, as the vulgar call them, from depriving me of my "bread and butter," by

proselyting my adherents; and that as I thought Mr. Campbell's plan likely to prove an Aaron's serpent, which would swallow up all sects, &c. I thought proper to adopt it!

In answer to the above, I will only remark at present, that I perceived that the New Testament facts, would drive into utter oblivion, not only Universalism, by which I mean the doctrine of no judgment and no punishment after death, but every other mongrel system under heaven, which should oppose its march, or put itself in array against its omnipotent arguments! and that they would also prove themselves to be an omniverous Aaron's rod, swallowing up all the factions, which at present disgrace christendom! and would extend their Divine influence abroad, until the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ! And although I was not much alarmed as to my "bread and butter," which seems to be the chief consideration with hireling priests, such as are some of my opponents, yet I was alarmed, from other considerations, most serious and awful. For although I was a Restorationist, I believed that the wilfully disobedient would receive a tremendous punishment after death, and was consequently confident that if I stifled my convictions, and submitted not to the commands of Jesus as fast as I grew into a knowledge of them, that I should not only be liable to that punishment, but should also justly demerit it. It is probable, however, that if I had believed myself to be bound in the adamantine chains of an inexorable fatality, —that with God there is no permanent distinction between good and evil, and that the whole of the punishment due to sin, treads immediately on the heels of transgression, my mind might have been brought so completely under the dominion of "bread and butter," as to have submitted to the laws of hireling priestcraft, instead of those of my Redeemer. And furthermore, if any man says that I did not, with all my heart, believe that I was obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ, when I submitted to immersion, or that I did not consider it to be my indispensable duty so to submit, he is guilty of a base and infamous falsehood!!

Brs. Williams, Jones, St. Clair and others, will remember with what earnestness and solicitude I propagated the principles of the reformation, in their respective vicinities. I have no disposition to deny, that it was then my opinion that the course pursued by the advocates for "the ancient order of things," would terminate in the doctrine of the Restorationists, and that in my letters to A. Sweet, of Marietta, as well as to others, and in my conversations with Restorationists, I frequently expressed myself as being of this opinion. And this was perfectly natural; for we are all prone to imagine our beloved peculiarities, even though they may be only the unsubstantial vagaries of our own brains, to be worthy of all acceptance. And furthermore, as I then believed the doctrine of Universal Restoration to be clearly taught in the New Testament, I could with such premises, arrive at no other conclusions; for as we had all agreed to understand the Book as it read, if the Book taught Universal Restoration, it would of course bring us all to the belief of that doctrine:—not Universalism, for I had rejected that with abhorrence several months before I was immersed!

Thus you see, gentle reader, how I have been misrepresented, and abused, and hunted like a partridge, not in consequence of having been guilty of any crime, but merely, because I was honest, and labored by night and by day to reconcile contending parties. The course which I pursued was in strict conformity with the law of Christ; and any man who would now accuse me of hypocrisy, for pursuing such a course, would condemn the apostle Paul for the same reason! Did not he "become all things to all men?"* Did not he say, "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God!"

Had I been seeking popularity, I would, immediately after my immersion, have avoided all intercourse with the Universalists, and have protested, on all occasions, against their doctrine. But as I sought, and ardently desired the welfare of my former associates, I continued my intercourse

*See page 205, of this work.

with them. What popularity, I would ask, could I expect to gain, by securing the favor of a few scattered Universalists? None! I always knew that I would, in a greater or less degree, render myself liable to the censure of other sects by so doing! But so ardent was my desire, to persuade those with whom I had formerly been identified, to conform to the New Testament order of things, that I disregarded, in a great measure, all consequences which I anticipated as the result of the course which I was pursuing! Those who have supposed that I would temporize with sectarians for the sake of popularity, are but little acquainted with the principles by which I am actuated. It was not my own good, but the good of the many, which I sought, and though my private conversations, and private letters, and the innermost recesses of my heart, should all be searched, with the spirited and rancorous scrutiny of a Spanish inquisition, I have a soul-satisfying consciousness that none but the jaundiced eye of malignity, can torture any of my proceedings so as to make it appear, that I was not stimulated to the course which I have pursued, by an ardent desire to see peace abounding on earth, and good will among men!

It is true, that acting as the apostle Paul in the fourteenth chapter of Romans commands us to do, must necessarily appear novel and unfashionable, in the present sectarianized state of christendom. For the fashion has been, ever since the Beast obtained his power, and his seat, and great authority, to trample under foot this incomparable chapter, which contains so important a portion of the law of our Lord Jesus Christ! and the consequence has been, that divisions innumerable have been multiplied in the land, and that a torrent of delusion pouring forth from the mouth of the great red dragon, has inundated the world!

And it is also true, that I have by pursuing this course, exposed myself to a thousand inconveniences, and evil surmises. But I do not regret it. I rejoice that it was ever my privilege to make any kind of sacrifice for the advancement of the kingdom of my Lord and Master. I rejoice that I was ever thought worthy to suffer for his name's sake. And although I know not, what yet awaits me, I am not

anxious with respect to myself. I am but an animated atom,—a dimensionless speck in the universe of Being, and if I should be crushed under the wheels of the car of some sectarian Juggernaut, it will be but an atom removed from its place!

I have long enough been tossed on the billows of the ocean of error! And having found a foundation of facts;—facts more permanent than are the foundations of the Andes or the Alleghany, I am resolved here to abide. Here I have terminated my zigzag journey from Babylon to Jerusalem! Here, at the foot of the cross, I have laid aside my speculative burden: and here, until mortal life shall cease, I will stand, and contemplate the wonders of redeeming love. Gospel facts are immutable things: like the rock of ages they can never move! Human opinions and imaginations may undergo their daily mutations,—may sink into oblivion, and be known no more at all, but these facts can never change!

When I retrospect my life, and measure the breadths and lengths, and depths and heights, of sectarian rubbish, which like mountains high, were heaped upon my mind, I rejoice that I have escaped so well! How many thousands have been crushed under ponderous masses of speculation! How many have mourned out their miserable days;—have been driven to insanity;—to infidelity;—to the practice of all manner of iniquity, by metaphysical priests and philosophers, who have unhinged christianity, and turned the world upside down by their conjectures. And shall I, after having seen the evils consequent on a departure from the simplicity of the gospel, preach my conjectures and imaginations? No, never! Sooner let my head repose under the cold clods of the valley!

If all who profess to preach the gospel, would resolve to take God at his word, or believe that when he speaks, he means what he says, and would lay their mere opinions by, as I did my Restorationist doctrine, it would not be long until peace, like an over-flowing stream, would gently roll through every heart, and tune every tongue to praise! Nothing but an inordinate love of human peculiarities, now hinders us from enjoying this blessed fruit of the gospel.

Can it be possible, that Jesus has given us such an ambiguous, and so perplexing a system of law, that we can in no wise understand it? No! such a thought is ungenerous! it is blasphemous! The Christian system is incomprehensible only to those, who desire to make its truths bend to their own peculiarities. It is hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes! The man who starts out in his biblical researches, to find the hidden meaning of words, rather than the words themselves, may expect to have a hard time of it. I have resolved to take God at his word, and consequently, never, in any case, to suppose that he means what he does not say. My faith will then come by the word of the Lord,—not by the hidden sense, or mystical meaning of the word, but by the word itself! and as to any opinions, which I may entertain about distant matters, or about any thing whatever, concerning which I have not a positive “thus saith the Lord,” and a thus saith the Lord too, in accordance with the whole context, they are my own property, and I shall give them away only when, and to whom I please! As a Christian, I have nothing to do with the thousands of untaught questions which are agitated in the religious world. And although this course may continue to expose me to the censure of such persons as are perpetuating in our country the horrors of sectarianism, I am resolved to continue to pursue it! When speculative questions are proposed to me, I will ask such as the following: Is this a Scriptural question? Would any good result from answering this question? Is it not better to confine ourselves to the positive declarations of God?

Men now almost universally attach too much importance to their opinions; that is, to those convictions of their mind, for which they have no positive testimony. The Calvinist is so certain of the correctness of his opinion, that he sings, prays, preaches, and argues it vehemently! The Arminian is just as certain that the Calvinist is wrong; and the Universalist that they are both wrong; and thus arise opinions on opinions, until they reach the skies, and become sanctified in the imaginations of their advocates, as truths Divine!

But this order of things cannot always continue. For if the New Testament system of facts does not become an Aaron's rod, and swallow them all, they will destroy themselves, and one another! "A house or kingdom divided against itself, cannot stand, but cometh to desolation." Already are thousands of Christians ashamed of the divisions which exist amongst them, and are espousing "the form of sound words," which will in proportion as they shall be observed, render divisions inadmissible. There is not one of the speculative, or philosophising sects, which does not contain within itself, the seeds of its own dissolution. They are all of them, except the Romanists, of recent origin, and must, in the common course of nature, soon sleep in the bosom of forgetfulness. Who ever read in the New Testament of such churches as those which now exist in this country? Universalist churches, &c. Will the New Testament support establishments, of which it says not one word, except by way of disapprobation? Never! We shall have no Universalist churches then,—no churches of any kind, but such as the Apostles and Evangelists constituted, when "the ancient order of things" shall be restored! The downfall of all these sectarian establishments, will be identified with the downfall of Babylon!

Thus, gentle reader, have I given you a relation, of some of the goods and evils, with which I have met, during my pilgrimage in this transitory world. It is now about two years since I embraced 'the primitive form of sound words:' and from that time to the present my faith has been regularly increasing, relative to those stupendous facts on which our holy religion is predicated; I have read the New Testament, not as a text Book, as I formerly did, but as I would any other ancient book which I desired to understand; and I am happy to inform you, that I have in this way, obtained more knowledge, concerning the Christian religion in one year, than I could have obtained in ten years, on the textuary plan.

And now, gentle reader, if *Calvin*, or *Arminius*, or the *Universe* be your husband: *You have I offended!* If you be a little onesided creature, having such a love for any of your peculiarities, which have not by our Lord Jesus Christ

and his Apostles been ordained, as tests of Christian fellowship and communion, as to be forever harping on them, making them the causes of divisions, and the centres of spurious sects, *I have sadly offended you!* Or if you have taken your seat in the temple of God, and as if you were God, have decreed that a part of the commands of Jesus are essential, and a part non-essential, and have usurped the power and authority of the Lord of All, by substituting your own laws for those of Jesus, for the government of the church,—*I have sorely offended you!* But if Jesus is your husband,—if for the sake of peace you are resolved to ‘become all things to all men,’ as far as the law of Jesus will permit you to do, and if you have actually done so, *I have not offended you!* And I hereby warn those sectarians who have trampled under their feet the above law of peace, to remember, that *they have offended their Maker!* And that it is a terrible thing to incur the displeasure of that Great Being, whose ‘wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who confine the truth by unrighteousness!’

And I also caution the public against being misled by the misrepresentations of our adversaries, who say, that baptism is our *hobby*. Baptism is no more our hobby, than are the other commands of our Divine Master. We intend to teach all his commands, and we pray, that we may be forever preserved from the sin of *picking*, and *culling*, and *mystifying* them, as do our adversaries.—[EDITOR.]

UNIVERSALISM.

A DISTINCTION has been marked, by nearly all who have vindicated the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all men, between those who deny future punishment, and those who believe in a limited punishment after death, by calling the former Universalists, and the latter Restorationists. And as I design offering a few thoughts relative to these doctrines in this paper, I will observe the above distinction.

It is my intention, to endeavor to prove, laconically, and positively, that Universalism, is not only, not a doctrine of the New Testament, but that it is most palpably contradicted, by many testimonies, found in the Christian Scriptures. And in order to do this, I will in the first place, prove, that there are three distinct classes of salvation taught in the New Testament, and that the fundamental assumptions of Universalists, on which Universalism is predicated, are in direct contradiction to the Apostolic doctrine, relative to these salvations.

Two of these salvations are taught, i. Tim. 4: 10. 'For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who IS the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.' As the Universalists are much in the habit of talking about the *present tense* of verbs, I here beseech them to observe, that the verb IS, is in the *present tense*; and that this text teaches one universal *present* salvation, without regard to faith or moral character, and one *present* special salvation, belonging only to the faithful. And further, that as both these salvations are expressly *present*; and the latter *special one*, is enjoyed only by those who believe, the *former salvation*, being *universal* and *present*, must necessarily signify that preservation, which by the common providence of God, all mankind in some degree enjoy. There is not another possible alternative! And therefore, those Universalists who talk and write of this Universal *present salvation*, as if the text carried it into futurity, and even into eternity, are guilty of just such an abuse of the *present tense* of this verb, as they so often charge upon their opponents, with respect to this *tense*, in many other places. The text does not say, that God *will* be the Saviour of all men to-morrow,—next week; next year,—nor in eternity! but simply, that he is *now*,—at the present moment, the Saviour of all men; and that there is another salvation, still more high than this,—special,—the special property of the believer! And it will consequently appear, that as many unbelievers were under sentence of condemnation at the very juncture of time at which this text was written, because they had not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God, that at the

very time in which God was the Saviour of all men, by his providential preservation of them, many of those who were the saved, in this sense, were the condemned, as it respects that salvation which is received 'by grace through faith.'

Let it next be observed, that the Universalists teach, that present salvation is obtained by works,* but that future eternal salvation is a free gift, bestowed, in the resurrection, upon all mankind, irrespective of works, or moral character. And this being a fact, I will prove that they have got the cart precisely before the horse, and consequently, that their whole system as a system, wrong end foremost!

We must therefore look into the New Testament, in order learn, what the Apostles teach, with respect to *works* and *present* salvation. Eph. ii. 8, 9. For by grace *are* ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of *works* lest any man should boast. Now is this a present, or a future salvation? *Present* most certainly! By grace *ARE* ye saved. Do the *saved* 'work out this salvation with fear and trembling?' 'Not of *works*,' says Paul, 'lest any man should boast.' This then is a *present special* salvation, the exclusive property of those who believe, the whole affair being of *grace*, by the efficacy of which grace the believer is saved through faith, and consequently not by *works*.

Again: 2 Tim. i. 9. 'Who *hath saved* us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our *works*, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' Also, Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by *works* of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he *saved* us, by the *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit: which he *shed* on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his *grace* we should be *made heirs* according to the hope of eternal life.'

Now you will observe, that we have, by the above testimonies, proved, as definitely as any proposition can be proved, that *present* salvation, is not in any way or manner, the result of our own *works* of righteousness: and we have by the last of these testimonies proved even more than this! We have proved, that those, and those only, who *were* 'saved by grace through faith,' were *heirs* according to the hope of eternal life. They were *made heirs* by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, and consequently were not heirs before. Believest thou this? Does not Universalism teach that all mankind irrespective of all moral discriminations are heirs, according to the hope of eternal life? Nay more, that they are not only heirs, but do their worst, that they cannot help inheriting everlasting

* If they deny this, I will prove it by the writings of their best authors.

life! And if so, how were those men of whom the Apostle here speaks, *made heirs*, by the washing* of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit?

Having now seen by the testimony of the infallible oracles, in what way men obtain present salvation, let us in the next place endeavor to learn from the same oracles, how future salvation is to be obtained. In Tit. iii. 8. The Apostle declares, that 'this is a faithful saying, and these things,' says he, 'I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain *good works*. These things are good and profitable unto men.' Now whom does the Apostle require to do good works? Those who *have believed*;—those who *have been saved* not by works, but by the grace of God through faith. Again: Eph. ii. 10. The Apostle immediately after having declared a present salvation by *grace* through *faith*, not of *works*, says, 'for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' Thus you will perceive from the light of these testimonies, that although *present* salvation was not wrought out by the works of the *saved*, yet as soon as God became the *special* Saviour of any believer, such believer, for a certain purpose, was to be careful to maintain good works, and we will now endeavor to prove, that, that certain purpose,—that profitable end which the believer was to have in view, in working good works, was future or final salvation!

Please then to observe gentle reader, that every one of the Epistles were addressed to churches, the members of which were of course believers, and consequently, *had been saved* with a *present* salvation. It is important that you should keep this in view, for inattention to this point, has been the cause of multiplied errors. Having this fact then fastened in your mind, let us listen in the first place to Paul's admonitions to the Saints of Philippi. That this Epistle was written to Saints, and consequently to those who had obtained *present* salvation, you may learn, from Paul's address in the first chapter. Hear then what he says to the Saints, chap. ii. 12. 'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you, to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Now I ask, what salvation was this which these Saints were commanded to work out? Not *present* salvation surely! for *this* is not of *works*; and besides, they had obtained *present* salvation sometime before this Epistle was written! The salvation then, which they were to *work out*, must necessarily have been *future*! By reading the context of this text, we learn, that *this* salvation was not only future, but that it was to be received, and enjoyed, in a future world. We prove this, from the fact, that Jesus himself in consequence of making

* Bath. Macknight.

himself of no reputation—taking upon himself the form of a servant &c. was 'highly exalted.' 'Wherefore,' says Paul, 'God also has highly exalted him.' That is because of the works which he had before mentioned, which had been wrought by Jesus! These works, are therefore given as a reason why Jesus was highly exalted after his death: and as the saints were admonished in the same connexion, to 'let the same mind be in them, which was in Christ Jesus,' we are constrained by the whole context to conclude, that these saints, in imitation of their Divine Exemplar were by their good works, to obtain an exaltation to that glorious throne to which Jesus in consequence of his good works, had been exalted! And the Apostle also teaches the same doctrine in Heb. xii. He there tells the saints to 'run with patience the race that was set before them: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of their faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.'

Now in order to arrive at right conclusions with respect to these testimonies, I ask first where was this joy, after which Jesus ran? *Ans.*: Not in this vale of tears, but 'at the right hand of the throne of God.' 2. Where was the object at which the saints were to look, when running the Christian race? *Ans.* At 'the right hand of the throne of God.' 3. What benefit were the saints to expect to receive, when they should arrive at the end of the race? *Ans.* The joy that was set before Jesus, and for which he endured the cross despising the shame: 'To him that overcometh,' says Jesus, 'will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.' The saints by working out their own salvation,—by remaining faithful to the end of their lives,—by overcoming as Jesus himself had overcome, were to enter into the joys, into which Jesus had entered, receiving a rest on his glorious throne!

In confirmation of this fact, let us now turn to ii. Pet. 1. Here we find this Apostle addressing those who had obtained 'precious faith,' and consequently *present special salvation*; having been as he says, 'purged from their old sins.' In this chapter, he instructs these saints, in what way an entrance was to be obtained into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. And here we must not forget, that these saints were already subjects of the *present kingdom* of Jesus;—that kingdom which in the days of John the Baptist, and for sometime afterwards was at hand; and which was established on the earth, on the day of Pentecost. These saints had *already* 'been translated from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan into the present kingdom of God.' They had also entered it, in accordance with its own laws, having been 'born of water and of spirit,' without which, Jesus declares, none can enter it. But now here is *another* kingdom to which Peter directs the attention of these subjects of the *present* kingdom of Jesus. And how are they to

become subjects of this everlasting kingdom, which they now in prospective view? By being 'born of water and spirit?' Peter does not say so! 'And besides this,' says he, 'giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

Thus you perceive that the laws agreeably with which these two kingdoms may be entered, are essentially different. The first was entered by being born of water and Spirit, or by being saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit: But the second by 'giving all diligence,'—by good works! The first was entered not on account of works of righteousness: but the second by working out our own salvation with fear and trembling,—for so an entrance,—not by water, nor exclusively by spirit,* but by giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure, will be ministered to us abundantly, &c.

We have now proceeded so far as to show, 1st. That there is a universal *present* salvation, by the providence of God. 2. That there is a *present special* salvation, 'by grace through faith,' enjoyed by such as have been saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit; or who have entered the present kingdom of Jesus, through a birth, by water and Spirit: and 3d. That there is a future salvation for those who work it out; or who give all diligence to obtain an entrance into the everlasting kingdom. But as many would no doubt prefer getting to heaven in their indolence, we will produce other testimonies by which to prove incontrovertibly the position which we have taken, with respect to future salvation.

In accordance with the testimonies which we have already produced in support of this position, let it be remembered, that Paul told Timothy, 'that godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' 'Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on

* I do not mean to say that the spirit will not help the infirmities of the saints, for I rejoice to believe that it will be their perpetual comforter, and that God will work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure. I only mean that such a birth as that of which we read in the iii. John is not an indispensable prerequisite, to an entrance into the everlasting kingdom.

eternal life, whereunto thou art called, &c.' Timothy in being saved by the washing of regeneration, &c. had become an heir of eternal life, and now in order to obtain, or lay hold of it, he must fight the good fight of faith,—he must give all diligence &c. And hence Paul says again. 'Charge them that are rich in *this world*, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth them all things richly to enjoy: that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.' Paul also tells us: 'Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.' But if the elect could obtain future salvation and eternal glory, as easily without Paul's labors and sufferings as with them, why did he think it so necessary, that he should labor and suffer, in order that they might obtain eternal glory? Surely Paul was not a Universalist!

In the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, he says: 'To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honor, immortality; eternal life.' That is, eternal life shall be given, to those, who seek for glory, honor, and immortality! and he tells us when this eternal life will be given to such as seek for it. 'In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.' In 1. Cor. ix. He tells us that 'he was running for an incorruptible crown;' and for the prize of the high calling of God; and in 2. Timothy, iv. chap. We find that this old soldier of the cross was just about to receive his glorious reward. 'I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto (all men, no,) all them that love his appearing.' Here then we learn that the Apostle expected to receive the crown for which he was running, and the prize after which he was pressing along the mark, after his departure from this world; and it seems also to have been his opinion, that this crown would not be given to any who do not run for it; and it must consequently, I think, be obvious to every discerning mind, that those who would enter the everlasting kingdom of Jesus, must be careful to maintain good works.

The present *kingdom* of Jesus, is like 'a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.' Matt. xiii. 47. Good and bad were received into this *kingdom*! But not so with the everlasting kingdom. Into that *kingdom*, flesh and blood could not enter 1. Cor. xv. 50. The Apostle addressing the subjects of the *present kingdom* 1. Cor. vii. 9, 10; whom he says had been washed, sanctified, and justified; but who had now done wrong by going to law with one another; says, 'know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the *kingdom* of God.' See the whole

connexion. And again, Eph. v. 5. 'For this ye know that no unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the *kingdom* of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.' And again, 2 Thes. 4: 5 'Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the *kingdom* of God for which ye also suffer.' Matt. vii. 21. 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord Lord, shall enter into the *kingdom* of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.'

Now all the above passages which speak of the *kingdom*, except the first, must relate to the future everlasting *kingdom*, and for the following obvious reasons: 1st. Because it has been proven that the present *kingdom*, 'gathered of every kind, good and bad.' 2d. Because its subjects were admitted, not on account of works of righteousness, or moral worth of any kind. 3d. Because the law agreeably with which men were to enter the second kingdom, or state of future glory, makes moral fitness a necessary prerequisite, as you may learn was the case, by every one of the above testimonies, and in fact, by all the testimonies which we have yet quoted, relative to the everlasting *kingdom*: And 4thly, and finally, because every one of the above admonitions were addressed to the subjects of the present *kingdom*, in order to stimulate them to diligence in all manner of good works, in order that they might obtain, as Peter says, 'an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.'

And it was with respect to this everlasting *kingdom*, that Jesus spake, when he said, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in *heaven*, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' And in Phil. iii. 1, 2, in strict accordance with the above admonition of Jesus, Paul says, 'If ye then be risen with Christ,' (that is, from the baptism in which he tells them, in the preceding chapter, they had been buried,) 'seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth.' And in Phil. iii. 20. 'For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.'

We cannot mistake when we say that these testimonies relate to the future everlasting kingdom of Jesus, for we have express testimony from the Apostle himself, that he was speaking of that eternal world, beyond the grave, into which Jesus had entered, and if so, then it irresistibly follows, that in order that we become rich toward God, we must lay up our treasures, in that place, where our hearts and our affections are to be,—we must lay up our treasures where Christ sitteth on the right hand

of God, that our conversation and our hearts may be where Jesus is, and that when we shall be removed hence, we may have treasure in the heavens! 'Blessed,' says the Spirit, 'are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the CITY.'

Having now proved that the ETERNAL LIFE is to be obtained by keeping the Divine commandments, permit me in the next place to prove, that even the *heirs* of this *life*, or the subjects of the *present* kingdom of Jesus, may lose, or forfeit it, by transgressing them!

'If any man shall take from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.' From this testimony it appears that a man by transgression might lose all interest,—all part, or lot, in all the gracious promises of this book, and consequently fall short of life eternal!

'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.' This passage proves that those who do not overcome, will have their names *blotted* out of the book of life. And this is in strict accordance with the testimony of Paul, when he says, 'to them that seek for glory, honor, immortality; eternal life.'

In the general epistle of Jude, we read of men who were like 'clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.' Did any person ever know a tree which was *twice* dead, and besides, was plucked up by the roots, that ever grew again?

The Apostle Peter, 2 Epis. ii. speaking of the same persons, says, 'but these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall *utterly perish* in their own corruption. He tells us that they are wells without water; clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. And that these were apostates from the Christian religion, is also evident from the succeeding verses of this chapter, only the last of which we will quote: 'It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog has turned to his vomit again; and, the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' Now from these testimonies it appears that these Apostates were no more considered heirs of glory, or subjects of salvation, than were the *beasts* of the field. Their destiny was the *mist of darkness*;—an *utter perishing* in their own corruption!

In the sixth chap. of Heb. we are taught, that if a person is once enlightened, and tastes the heavenly gift, and is made partaker of the Holy Spirit, and tastes the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if he shall fall away, it is im-

possible! yes! *impossible to renew him again to repentance.* And in the tenth chapter we are told, that if we sin *willfully* after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries; and that so dreadful would the punishment, consequent on apostacy be, that temporal death without mercy as it was inflicted by the law of Moses, would not be near so sore, as this punishment. In the xii. chap. he warns them lest any among them should fail of the *grace*, or *favor* of God, and lets them know, that if they did fail, they would forfeit their birthright (which we have proved to be eternal life;—the life to which every soul born from above is heir,) and that this birthright would be as irrevocably lost, as was that of Esau. Read the whole connexion. He also tells them in the tenth chapter, that God had said, 'the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'

Now I ask how it can be possible that a person in whom God has no pleasure;—who has as certainly lost eternal life, the birthright of Christians, as Esau had his;—who could not possibly be renewed to repentance;—for whose sins there was no sacrifice;—for whom nothing remained but fiery indignation;—to whom the blackness of darkness was reserved forever;—who were trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots;—and who as natural brute beasts were to be taken and destroyed; and were *utterly to perish* in their own corruption;—I ask where can salvation be found for such undone rebels as these? The God who created them, has ceased to have pleasure in them;—the Redeemer who died for them, will be a sacrifice for them no more;—they have failed of the favor of heaven, and are consequently destined to the frightful jaws of destruction, prepared to swallow them down!

I am no longer astonished when I hear the Apostle say, 'knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men;'—'it is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God.' I am not surprized that Felix* trembled, when Paul 'reasoned with him concerning righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come;' nor that Paul should say to his Christian brethren, 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.'

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Objection 1. If present salvation be obtained without works, all will obtain it on whom God bestows it, and if he bestow it upon all, then will not all be saved?

Answer. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared," and the reason why all do not obtain a

* Felix was a Roman governor, and consequently could not have trembled through a dread of the calamities which were coming on Jerusalem, for he was not exposed to those calamities.

present salvation, is, not that they are required to work for it, in order to obtain it, but because they work against it;—they put it far from them;—they will not have it. Remission of sins and the hope of eternal life is presented to every creature, wherever the pure gospel is proclaimed, irrespective of works or moral character; and as the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, it imparts salvation, to all to whom it is preached, who remain passive under its influences, and fails to save such, and such only, as resist those influences! The word preached, or taught, in the first place creates faith in the mind of the hearer; for “faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord:”—it, “next convinces the sinner, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;—it fastens itself upon his heart through every avenue, through which it can possibly pass; and it draws the sinner towards God, in exact proportion as it can find media through which to influence his soul, and saves him, not by works, but by “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

The case may be familiarly illustrated as follows: A certain father has a disobedient son, who has rendered himself infamous by his numerous misdeeds; and being moreover in a state of poverty and wickedness from which he can never extricate himself, the tender compassions of the father, move him, to use means, by which to make his son happy and respectable. “Son” says he, “you have acted very wickedly;—you have long abused my goodness, and have indeed sunk yourself very low in vice and misery. But I have determined to do something for your benefit; for I still love you, notwithstanding all your ingratitude to me! I will freely forgive and forget your past transgressions, if you will permit me to do so; and besides, I will give you ten thousand dollars, as capital with which for you to begin business, and by the prudent occupancy of which, you may become affluent and happy!” These words of the father, pierce the son to the heart! “O! what goodness is this,” in the overwhelming emotions of his soul he cries! The father forgives! But can the son say that it was in consequence of any of his own good works? No! He had none. The father also bestows on him the capital proposed! Can the son say it was by his good works, that he obtained this capital! By no means! The son afterwards works by night and by day, in pursuance to the directions of his father, in order to increase his fortune! Can he at any subsequent period of his life, say, that he would ever have been worth a cent, had it not been for the benefactions of his father? No! He was saved from poverty and contempt by the favor,—the grace of his father: Just so it is with the sinner; “he is saved by grace, through faith and that not of himself, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast;” and this grace, is the capital with which the Father of mercies

*Or the Holy Spirit by the word convinces them.

invests him ; and thus is he "created unto good works ; and enabled to walk in them, and to work out his future salvation by them, just as the son mentioned above, by industry, increased his fortune !

But had this son, when the father made his kind advances to him, have drawn back, and wrought hard against the invitations of his father, he would have acted precisely as those sinners do, who resist the influences of the gospel, and reject the counsel of God against themselves ! We say therefore, that it is not in consequence of a want of works, that sinners are not saved with a present salvation, but that it is by works,—evil works, that they perpetuate their captivity, and draw down condemnation upon their own heads : and that the grace that brings salvation to all men, *saves* all men (for this passage is in the present tense,) who do not in some way, put it from them. And that those who do so are without excuse : for if my physician gives me medicine which possesses efficacy to save my life, and I throw it into the fire, that medicine, no matter how efficacious, cannot save me !

Objection 2. If men are to get to heaven by works, what will become of infants, idiots, and even those who die in so short a time after their conversion, that they have not an opportunity to perform good works ? Are all these to be shut out of heaven for the want of works ?

Answer. By no means. "If there be first a willing mind, it is required according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." Though God be an exact, yet "he is not a hard Master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strewn." Of every man, he requires, according to his ability,—not beyond it ; and therefore when he gives nothing, he requires nothing !

Objection 3. Is not eternal life the *gift* of God ; and if so, does it not preclude the necessity of our working, in order to obtain it ?

Answer. Eternal life is the gift of God ; and so are many other things. "Every good and every perfect gift cometh from above." But the fact that a thing is a gift, does not prove that we will not neglect and abuse it, so as to receive no benefit from it. In order that we should be benefited by any gift we must cultivate it. Jesus was given : and consequently was an inestimable gift, but still those who trample under their feet his precious blood, will by the abuse of this gift ruin their own souls. The gospel of life is a gift ; but it is the savor of death unto death to those who reject it. The one talent was a gift ; but wailing and gnashing of teeth was the consequence of possessing such a gift and failing to cultivate it. Righteousness is called the "gift of righteousness ;" but in order that it should benefit us, we must "exercise ourselves unto righteousness." Our eyes and ears are gifts ; but we may shut our eyes against light, and our ears against truth, and so abuse all our senses, and all our faculties,

as to make them curses instead of blessings. Our daily bread is a gift: "give us this day our daily bread;" but still we must cultivate our fields in order to obtain this gift; and so it is with the gift of eternal life. I have already proved, that we, according to our abilities, must become rich in good works, must keep the commandments in order to obtain it. And those who say that eternal life cannot be a gift, agreeably with the above principle of works, had just as well deny that any of the bounties of nature are gifts! God has given to christians eternal life, and this life is in his Son; and consequently he who has the Son has life; and he who has not the Son has not life; and hence Jesus says: John 8, 12. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Objection 4. Does not Paul, 1 Cor. 15. teach that in the resurrection all mankind will be clothed with immortality, and that they will consequently inherit eternal life?

Answer. No. Paul never so palpably contradicted himself, nor his Savior, as to teach any such doctrine. We have seen by the preceding testimonies relative to this point, what was the doctrine of the Apostle; as well as that of Jesus, with respect to life eternal. If Jesus believed in the doctrine of Universal salvation, not through faith, nor by works; I wonder that he had not said something about it, to the young man whom he loved, when he said to him, "good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Had Jesus believed in the doctrine exhibited in the above objection, he might have said to this young man: "Do nothing! Eternal life is a free gift, and all mankind will obtain it, without any exertions of their own!" But no, Jesus imposed on him a task, which seems to have been thought by the young man, to be a very hard one. "Sell all that thou hast" said Jesus, "and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me!"

"Verily verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." It has generally been taken for granted, without proof, that Jesus here speaks of the morally dead. I think however, that he had an allusion to the literally dead, several of whom heard his voice and lived. "Marvel not at this," that is, at this miracle of raising the dead, "for the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation, John 5. This agrees precisely with the testimony of Paul, Acts xxiv. 15, when he says "there will be a resurrection of the dead both of the just and the unjust." But according to Universalism there will be no resurrection of the unjust, because there will be none who can be called unjust after they are dead. The Apostle however, it seems, believed that there would be some unjust men in the resurrection, and consequently that they would come forth to the resurrection of condemnation: and as to the resurrection

of life, he hoped by fighting the good fight of faith to be himself a happy subject, Phil. 3, 11. "If by any means" says he, "I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." In 2 Cor. v. 4, 5, Paul says "for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God." In the preceding chapter the Apostle had said, that "our light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." By reading the whole context, you will find that this glory awaited them "in a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and that this glory was one of the unseen things at which they looked, and which was wrought out for them by those afflictions which they suffered in following Jesus through many tribulations, and that God himself had wrought them for the enjoyment of that glory, and as an earnest thereof, had given them his Spirit; and that they in consequence hoped that their mortality would be swallowed up of life. From the whole of which it is as obvious to my mind as any thing can be, that a preparation in this life was necessary in order to an admission into the heavenly mansions, and to the putting on of immortality. And hence he says also, Rom. vii. 11. But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' Thus you see that the whole matter, as it relates to whether our mortality will, or will not be swallowed up of life, depends on this one circumstance: whether the Spirit of God dwell in us here. If it do, then that very Spirit which quickened the body of Jesus, will also quicken our mortal bodies, in which case, 'we shall not be found naked.'

I am sensible, that but few of the arguments which I have presented against Universalism, have any bearing against the doctrine of the Restorationists. Nor have I any disposition, to argue against that doctrine. I am on good terms with many of the Restorationists, and in so far as they will submit to the government of Jesus Christ, I intend to continue so. I at this very moment remember with love and admiration the great Winchester, who was instrumental in reclaiming me from my sinful pursuits. I believe him to have been a Christian;—a noble illustrious Christian! And although I now believe that there are some men, who are so wicked, as that they can never be restored to holiness and happiness, yet I do not think that their utter ruin will be in consequence of any defect in the Divine benevolence. 'God is love,'—and love he will ever be! But more of this hereafter!

Reader, I pray God, that you may know the truth, and that the truth may make you free.

AYLETT RAINS.